

National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration

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A/D-1422/RMS

January 4, 2010

Memorandum for the Record

FROM: A/Procurement Officer

SUBJECT: Source Selection Statement under Request for Proposals (RFP)  
NND09286137R for Center Administrative and Technical Support  
Services (CATSS)

This memorandum documents the basis for my decision as Source Selection Authority (SSA) to select Media Fusion, Inc., of Huntsville, AL for contract award under the subject solicitation.

A. Procurement History Narrative

This procurement was solicited and evaluated under the provisions of Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and NASA FAR Supplement Part 15, Contracting by Negotiations. The RFP was issued on August 12, 2009, and proposals were received from the following six Offerors (listed in alphabetical order) on September 29, 2009:

Media Fusion, Inc. (Huntsville, AL)  
Phoenix Engineering Company, Inc. (Carson, CA)  
Prairie Quest Consulting (Ft. Wayne, IN)  
Project XYZ, Inc. (Huntsville, AL)  
REDE-Critique (joint venture from New Orleans, LA)  
SDSE (Silver Spring, MD)

No late proposals were received. All Offerors were verified as Small Business Administration (SBA) 8(a) Program firms at time of proposal submission.

The appointed evaluation team concluded their evaluation on November 30, 2009. Assessment included consideration of the following evaluation factors, listed in the RFP in descending order of importance: past performance, mission suitability and price. The mission suitability factor had three subfactors, valued as indicated: Management Approach (700 points), Technical Approach (200 points) and Safety (100 points).

By letter dated October 20, 2009, Phoenix Engineering was informed that their proposal was determined to be unacceptable and eliminated from further consideration. This was due, in good measure, to a failure to adequately identify skill mixes and employee wages and benefits. Phoenix Engineering acknowledged receipt of the notice and never contested the Government's determination or requested a debriefing.

## B. Findings Narrative

The following narrative summarizes the team's evaluation result for the three factors.

### 1. Past Performance

Very high Government confidence in Media Fusion, Inc. (MFI) past performance resulted from two significant strengths:

- Past performance is comparable and very highly relevant to this procurement, and the quality of performance is characterized by customers as excellent.
- Proposed subcontractor, Science and Commercial Systems Corporation (SCSC), currently performs under two DFRC contracts: Technical and Administrative Support Services and Logistics, each of which is comparable in value to this effort. Customer respondents characterized performance as excellent in virtually all cited areas.

The Government's confidence level of the past performance for the joint venture of REDE/Critique (RCJV) was also rated very high. This resulted primarily from the following significant strength:

- Three very highly relevant contracts ranging from \$15M to \$45M. Under these contracts, six out of the eight CATSS functions are performed. Responses consistently rate the team as excellent.

The Government's confidence in Project XYZ past performance was considered moderate due essentially to the following findings:

#### 1. Significant strength

- Project XYZ's major subcontractor, Infinity Technology, Inc., performs all of the anticipated CATSS requirements under the current technical administrative services contract. Infinity's performance has been consistently rated excellent overall.

#### 2. Significant weakness:

- Record does not provide confidence Project XYZ can manage a contract of this size. They referenced only two contracts: one for \$3.5M, with 10 Work Year Equivalents (WYE), and another for \$250K with only 1 WYE.

For Prairie Quest (PQ) and SDSE, the Government's confidence levels of past performance were rated very low primarily as a result of the absence of significant strengths and the following significant weaknesses:

#### Prairie Quest

- Little confidence PQ can manage a contract of this size. Only one questionnaire response received, for a time and materials contract for four years and approximately \$500K.

#### SDSE

- Record does not provide confidence that SDSE can manage a contract of this size. SDSE contracts are from \$2.0M to \$3.5M, and all resulted in Time and Materials type contracts.

## 2. Mission Suitability

MFI has the far superior mission suitability proposal, with a characterization of excellent and more significant strengths (4) and more strengths (5) than any other Offeror. MFI had no significant weaknesses and only 3 weaknesses.

Significant strengths include:

- Program Manager (PM) is granted full autonomy over all areas of the contract regardless of company affiliation. He has direct authority to assess subcontractor's performance. Deputy PM (DPM) will fill in for PM during absences and has full support from MFI & SCSC. PM will be employed by MFI; DPM by SCSC.
- MFI's plan to provide alternate key personnel (PM and DPM) gives the Government a high level of confidence in their management approach. This is evident from the following: alternate personnel are clearly identified; they are apparently committed and immediately available; their education and experience are exemplary.
- Generous compensation plans will help ensure morale, retention, attraction and motivation of all employees. Typical benefits include company paid health insurance, dental, vision, retirement (no vesting period) and liberal leave policy. All employees regardless of status (Exempt/Non-Exempt) will receive same benefits.
- Management Tenets provide clear direction on how their corporate values will be applied in accomplishing the Performance Work Statement (PWS) effort and contributing to the accomplishment of DFRC's mission. The Offeror's proposed approach to performing the work as required by the PWS presents an efficient and realistic approach.

The high number of strengths and low number of weaknesses in the MFI proposal justify their characterization of excellent and score of 915 points (out of a possible 1000).

The RCJV mission suitability proposal was characterized as good with two significant strengths, four strengths, two significant weaknesses and five weaknesses. Significant findings include the following:

1. Significant strengths:

- REDE's proposed compensation plan is inclusive and generous, and will help ensure the attraction, motivation and retention of qualified personnel. All companies' employees will receive the same fringe, salary structure, bonus structure and human resources programs.
- Aspects of the proposed Management Operation Plan will help to ensure effective administration of the contract. These include, for example, forming a cohesive Management Team; appointing an Advisory Council, and introducing unique testing concepts.

2. Significant weaknesses:

- Key personnel are not specifically identified. Offeror only provides a sample resume of how they would fill one out and what qualifications would apply in hiring such personnel. We were unable to determine if they have anyone proposed and if so, what their capabilities are.
- There is no evidence in the Offeror's proposal that the two subcontractors, Deltha and Logical, agree with their participation as a team member with the RCJV. The joint venture proposes that these two subcontractors provide a significant portion of the contracted labor.

The relative balance in the number of strengths and weaknesses in the RCJV proposal justify their characterization of good and score of 590 points.

The PQ mission suitability proposal was characterized as fair with a significant strength, four strengths, five significant weaknesses and two weaknesses. Significant findings include the following:

1. Significant strength:

- PQ's subcontractor, Al-Razaq's, generous compensation plan will ensure morale, retention, attraction and motivation of subcontractor employees. Typical benefits include company paid health insurance, dental, vision, education, and liberal vacation and sick days.

2. Significant weaknesses:

- Offeror does not clearly specify who is being proposed as the PM. The inability to clearly identify the PM casts doubt on how PQ would effectively manage contract performance,

interact with the Government, solve performance issues and problems, access corporate resources and supervise employees.

- Offeror does not adequately explain how they would handle PM absences. No DPM is being proposed, nor has PQ offered an alternative means for effectively covering those absences (such as rotating among contract technical leads).
- PQ's compensation plan does not provide sufficient information to adequately assess its benefits in attracting, motivating or retaining qualified staff. For example, it does not specify amounts or coverage for health, dental, vision, life, Accidental Death & Dismemberment insurance or educational assistance and professional development.
- There is no evidence that Al-Razaq agrees with their participation as a team member with PQ. Lacking definitive evidence of a PQ/Al-Razaq teaming arrangement calls into question findings in the Offeror's proposal.
- Proposal does not clearly state which portions of the PWS are being performed by PQ and Al-Razaq, nor the distribution of personnel between the prime and subcontractor.

The number of significant weaknesses, and the relatively few strengths, in the PQ proposal justify their characterization of fair and score of 445 points.

The Project XYZ mission suitability proposal was also characterized as fair with no significant strengths, two strengths, three significant weaknesses and three weaknesses. Significant findings include the following:

1. Significant strengths: None
2. Significant weaknesses:
  - There is no evidence that major subcontractor, Infinity Technology, Inc. agrees with their participation as a team member with Project XYZ. Lacking definitive evidence of a Project XYZ/Infinity teaming arrangement calls into question findings in the Offeror's proposal.
  - Offeror fails to adequately describe the specific roles and responsibilities to be assigned to Infinity, nor to identify the distribution of personnel between the prime and subcontractor.
  - Differences in proposed benefits, such as vacation, holiday, retirement and education, would likely cause morale issues between employees and possible financial concerns.

The number of significant weaknesses, and the relatively few strengths, in the Project XYZ proposal justify their characterization of fair and score of 440 points.

The SDSE mission suitability proposal was characterized as fair with a significant strength, a strength, five significant weaknesses and four weaknesses. Significant findings include the following:

1. Significant strength:

- The compensation plans for SDSE and their subcontractor, Dozier Technologies, Inc. (DTI), are virtually identical and provide sufficient benefits to help ensure the retention of their respective personnel. These benefits include: HMO, dental, vacation and sick leave.

2. Significant weaknesses:

- Proposing to have DPM located full time in Silver Spring, MD will not permit that individual to effectively perform many of the critical DPM functions.
- Multiple references to cost management, primarily under paragraph 2.1, indicate that the Offeror may not understand that this is a Firm Fixed Price contract.
- There is no evidence in the Offeror's proposal that their major subcontractor, Dozier Technologies, Inc. agrees with their participation as a team member with SDSE. Lacking definitive evidence of a SDSE/DTI teaming arrangement calls into question findings in the Offeror's proposal.
- Proposal fails to clearly specify who the key personnel will be, whether incumbent personnel or additions to the CATSS staff.
- Multiple technical descriptions simply repeat the PWS, and the Offeror does not provide any additional material or insight that gives the Government confidence that they understand those PWS requirements.

The number of significant weaknesses, and relatively few strengths, in the SDSE proposal justify their characterization of fair and score of 370 points.

3. Price: The following table summarizes the proposed/evaluated prices of all Offerors:

	<b>SDSE</b>	<b>MFI</b>	<b>PQ</b>	<b>Project XYZ</b>	<b>RCJV</b>
<b>Phase-In</b>	\$ -0-	\$ -0-	\$ -0-	\$ -0-	\$ -0-
<b>Basic Fixed-Price</b>	\$ 3,166,639	\$ 3,551,868	\$ 3,442,483	\$ 3,810,075	\$ 3,709,919
<b>Option #1 Fixed Price</b>	\$ 3,166,639	\$ 3,559,452	\$ 3,545,758	\$ 3,810,075	\$ 3,772,208
<b>Option #2 Fixed Price</b>	\$ 3,166,639	\$ 3,567,276	\$ 3,652,130	\$ 3,810,075	\$ 3,837,885

	<b>SDSE</b>	<b>MFI</b>	<b>PQ</b>	<b>Project XYZ</b>	<b>RCJV</b>
<b>Option #3 Fixed Price</b>	\$ 3,166,639	\$ 3,575,328	\$ 3,761,694	\$ 3,810,075	\$ 3,906,108
<b>Option #4 Fixed Price</b>	\$ 3,166,639	\$ 3,583,620	\$ 3,874,545	\$ 3,810,075	\$ 3,975,710
<b>Cost No Fee (All Years)</b>	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$15,933,196	\$17,937,544	\$18,376,610	\$19,150,375	\$19,301,830

No adjustments in proposed prices were made by the Government to correct calculation errors. All prices were determined to be balanced against the Contract Line Items and were considered fair and reasonable due to adequate price competition.

### C. Source Selection Decision

Details of the evaluation results were presented to me and other senior Center personnel by team members on December 1 and 3, 2009. During those presentations, we asked questions and received clarifications to the team's findings, as needed to more accurately understand the evaluation results. I am confident that those results form a solid basis upon which I may make this selection decision.

Using the findings presented by the team, and not taking any exceptions to the results presented, I concur in the following evaluation results:

Offeror	Past Performance Confidence	Mission Suitability Rating and Score	Price Evaluation
MFI	Very High	Excellent: 915	\$17,938K
RCJV	Very High	Good: 590	\$19,302K
Project XYZ	Moderate	Fair: 440	\$19,150K
PQ	Very Low	Fair: 445	\$18,377K
SDSE	Very Low	Fair: 370	\$15,933K

I note that MFI has the highest past performance confidence level (along with RCJV), the highest mission suitability rating, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest proposed/evaluated price.

The solicitation provision at M.2, Evaluation Criteria Weighting and Scoring, calls for the SSA to "make his/her decision on the basis of an integrated assessment of all three factors." My decision is premised on the following conclusions:

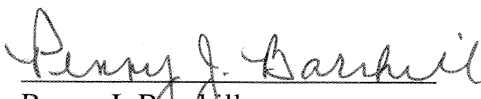
1. The lack of Government confidence in the past performance records of PQ and SDSE were discriminators in their not being selected for this award, while the past performance characterizations for only MFI and RCJV reflect a very high Government confidence in their respective records.
2. MFI's mission suitability characterization of excellent, and resulting score of 915 points, far exceed that of the next highest Offeror, RCJV. Additionally, the RCJV price exceeds that of

MFI by about \$1.4M. With virtually identical past performance characterizations, considerably lower mission suitability score, and higher price, there is no justification to select the RCJV proposal over that from MFI. The superiority of their technical proposal was a discriminator in MFI's selection for award.

3. I note that SDSE has the lowest price and MFI has the second lowest price. The relatively high prices for the RCJV and Project XYZ proposals were contributors in their not being selected for award of this procurement. While the proposed price from SDSE is approximately \$2M less than that for MFI, any potential savings from that difference would be far out-weighed by performance risks inherent in the significant weaknesses of the SDSE proposal. These risks are associated with critical topics such as the DPM's location, understanding the contract type, subcontractor commitment to the proposed teaming arrangement, identification of specific key personnel, and adequate understanding of the PWS. It is clearly in the Government's best interests to trade-off the possible lower amount the Government might incur in accepting the SDSE proposal in order to gain the significant technical benefits of the MFI proposal.
4. The evaluation team's findings in all three factors relating to the Project XYZ proposal prevent that proposal's selection over the MFI proposal. Project XYZ has a lower past performance confidence level than that for MFI (moderate vs. very high), a significantly lower mission suitability characterization/score (fair/440 vs. excellent/915) and higher proposed/evaluated price (\$19,150,375 vs. \$17,937,544).

Based upon the findings presented, and my conclusions given above, I determine that the proposal received from MFI to be the best overall value to the Government. This determination reflects MFI's excellent past performance (with concomitant very high Government confidence), the number of significant mission suitability strengths and few weaknesses, and second lowest proposed/evaluated price. It is the combination of these findings, and not any single factor conclusion, that forms the basis for my decision.

I further conclude that holding discussions would not likely result in another Offeror overcoming my decision that the MFI proposal provides the best value to the Government for this requirement. Therefore, I select MFI for an award of a contract resulting from this solicitation without final revisions being requested.

  
Penny J. Barnhill  
Source Selection Authority

  
Date